



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Informal Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance

(7-8 June 2018)

**(Tentative) Thursday, June 7 2018,
Geneva, WMO**

Madam President¹,

- The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising the United Nations entities involved in mine action.
- I wish to congratulate you for your election as President of the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Over the years, Afghanistan has demonstrated strong commitment to the humanitarian objectives of the Convention.
- The United Nations wishes to welcome Sri Lanka and the State of Palestine as States Parties to the Convention. We encourage States who have not joined, to do so without delay.
- After nearly two decades of steadily diminishing casualty rates, the total number of people killed or injured by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in recent conflicts has leapt to its highest since 1999.²
- Victim assistance should be a continued priority to help the victims to rebuild their lives and livelihoods, and exercise their rights as full and equal members of society.
- Recent analysis from the United Nations Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism highlighted the importance for a country to integrate victim assistance policy within the national health system to provide more adequate services through broader and sustainable support.³

Excellences,

- The practical implementation of Article 5 must increasingly assess the concrete impact of our work on affected communities.

¹ H.E. Suraya Dalil, Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the United Nations

² Landmine Monitor Report 2017: In 2015, 6,967 casualties recorded, against 8,605 in 2016. A 19% increase.

³ Report of the 7th Round of Data Collection; M&E Mechanism of the UN Strategy for Mine Action 2013 – 2018; United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action; May 2018

- In March 2018, with UNMAS support and Sudan's high-level commitment towards APMBC, the destruction of all known anti-personnel landmine contamination in Eastern States of Sudan was completed. With this achievement, 80 % of known landmine contaminated areas in Sudan are cleared; but what is the impact?
- For example, in Khor Oddie State, the clearance enabled the restoration of a main road between Karakoon and Hamashkorieb. The population can now freely move between these localities, where previously people made a six-hour detour, offering income generation and local development opportunities. In rural Kassala, a new hospital was established in the area of Eid Musa, where access was previously limited because of landmines contamination.
- The restoration of access to basic services and livelihoods also creates preconditions for communities' reconciliation and sustained peace in the region. Indeed, the work of mine action makes tangible contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Furthermore, the United Nations considers critical that the implementation of Article 6 on International Cooperation and Assistance aims at developing national capacity that will enhance long-term sustainability and full national ownership of the landmine problems.
- In Tajikistan, UNDP helped develop the national capacity of the Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre, including the formulation of strategic national policies, such the National Mine Action Law, Mine Action Strategy, and National Mine Action Standards; and provided survivor and victim assistance technical support to the Ministry of Health. A national capacity transition plan has been produced to achieve full national ownership.
- In Somalia, UNMAS has built capacity within national entities including the Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA). In the past year, SEMA took full ownership of the Information Management System and finalized the National Mine Action Strategy. Additionally, UNMAS continued to enhance the operational capability of the Somali Police by providing technical support and advice to EOD personnel.

Excellences,

- The current Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action concludes this year. We are organizing consultations with Member States, and civil society as your inputs and perspectives will be invaluable in the development of our next strategy. Greater impact for affected communities, socioeconomic development, and sustaining peace will be at the heart of our commitments to fulfil the goals of the Maputo Action Plan.
- This year the extension requests of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Serbia, Sudan, and the United Kingdom remind us that the 2025 vision is challenging. Yet it is achievable with the mobilization of the international community in support of affected States.
- In the Democratic Republic of Congo, 77% of known suspected hazardous areas have been cleared. Compliance with Article 5 deadline by 2021 can be realised if financial efforts are sustained to clear the remaining western and northern provinces. To name only a few others, Afghanistan, Angola, Afghanistan, Cambodia, South Sudan have also considerable funding needs to keep up the pace to meet the clearance obligations by 2025.⁴
- The recent General Assembly resolution on Assistance in Mine Action⁵, “urged all, in particular those that have the capacity to do so, to provide reliable, predictable, timely, and where possible, multi-annual contributions to mine action capacities”.
- We thank donors for their continued trust in the efforts led by the United Nations, as well as affected states and civil society for the strong partnership in serving with efficiency the affected communities. This collaborative spirit will continue to pave the way towards a world free of landmines by 2025.
- Thank you.

⁴ United Nations Portfolio on Mine Action; April 2018

⁵ GA Resolution 72/75